



**October 2006**

## AWN Monthly Newsletter

### Send us your story

Do you have a story you would like to share with other end users? Any advice you want to pass along to agencies that are awaiting a cutover in their area? We want to know how AWIN is working for you! Please send your comments to [awin@arkansas.gov](mailto:awin@arkansas.gov).

### AWN Support

In partnership with the Arkansas State Police (ASP), the Department of Information Systems (DIS) operates the AWIN Call Center to support all AWIN subscribers (radio users) with technical assistance or AWIN-related requests.

Technicians are on call in the event of any emergency. Call (501) 682-HELP (682-4357) or toll-free (800) 435-7989 or e-mail:

[awin.support@arkansas.gov](mailto:awin.support@arkansas.gov)

### AWN assists in recent event

Central Arkansas AWIN users had the opportunity to use the AWIN system for coordination of a recent event. The Big Dam Bike Tour was held on October 1, 2006 in conjunction with the opening of a new pedestrian bridge crossing the Arkansas River. More than 1,100 riders participated in the race, and more than 200 emergency responders assisted with the event coordination.

In order to fulfill grant requirements, local agencies were facing the need to conduct an emergency exercise. The bike tour provided a great opportunity for emergency response agencies across central Arkansas to use the AWIN system to coordinate efforts for a real event. The groups involved were able to utilize some of the same resources that would be used in a disaster scenario, as well as practice using AWIN.

Prior to the event, numerous meetings were conducted to coordinate the efforts of emergency response agencies and directors of the bike tour. Representatives from more than 20 different agencies assisted in the event preparation, including law enforcement, fire, public works, HAM radio, emergency management,



and ambulance services.

Nine jurisdictions participated in the exercise and assisted with the inaugural event, kicking off and ending at Burns Park in North Little Rock. Three mobile command centers were established with the help of Pulaski County, North Little Rock, and Faulkner County.

Through the use of the AWIN system, emergency workers and event coordinators, received constant updates on the status of the race. Everyone was always aware of the location of the lead of the race as well as the end of the race, which provided some safety measures for participants. They were also able to communicate with the volunteer fire groups that manned rest stops along the race route.

The first time event went off smoothly according to event coordinators. "Events

like this can be dangerous, and we did not have anyone hurt," said Pulaski County Emergency Management Coordinator Kathy Botsford. "That many jurisdictions coordinating one event worked out extremely well because of AWIN and interoperable communication. It took a lot of the guess work out of the event."

### Area B tower site

Recently, AWIN users in the White County area faced some operational issues with the radio system. Through system testing, it was determined that the source of the problems was coming from the Floyd tower site (B21). An inspection of the tower revealed that the receive antenna previously suffered a lightning strike, damaging the equipment. The lightning strike exposed the antenna to the elements, causing unwanted emissions.

Initially, the problem was not typical of a lightning strike, but appeared to be an unusual interference situation. The situation caused a "receive interference shutdown" condition on

four out of five stations at the site. The condition is one where the system detects unwanted signals on a receiver at a site and temporarily removes that channel from operation to avoid degrading performance caused by the interference.

Typically, the problem will correct itself and return the station to operation after a period, but when more than half the channels at the site were not operating normally the system placed the site on a mode to prevent users from using a degraded site. Technicians have replaced the damaged antenna, and the issues with the tower have been resolved.

## Three County Pilot Project update

The implementation of the pilot project in Lonoke County is nearing completion. Radio installations for all county entities are being finalized. Technicians are currently working on radio installations for a few of the volunteer fire departments in the county, which should wrap up in the next week. Volunteer fire departments received radios to equip the Command and Control use of AWIN. The volunteer groups will use the AWIN system for interoperability with other public safety entities, while using existing systems for day-to-day operations.

The Arkansas Department of Emergency Management (ADEM) will schedule a Command and Control training session for Lonoke County within the next month. The session will address plans for Command and Control usage for the county.

Craighead County recently completed upgrades for Jonesboro dispatch facilities, and the local telecommunications provider has installed a needed T1 line. Due to the need for upgrades, project managers have altered the overall schedule for project implementation. Training is scheduled for the county,

which began November 1st and ends November 14th. Full-time entities should cut-over to the AWIN system immediately following training, and the implementation of the pilot project should be complete by the end of November.

To allow for the installation of AWIN consoles, the Texarkana dispatch center is currently undergoing upgrades that are scheduled for completion in November. The Miller County Sheriff's Office dispatch console installation is complete, and training for county agencies will be conducted following Craighead County. Most Miller County entities will cut-over to AWIN during the month of December, with Texarkana operations following after the completion of the dispatch center. Project managers should complete pilot project implementation in Miller County by the end of the year.

If there are any questions about the current status of the Three County Pilot Project, please contact Randy Wilcox at the Department of Information Systems (DIS) 501.682.2603 or [randy.wilcox@arkansas.gov](mailto:randy.wilcox@arkansas.gov).

## New AWIN leadership



Penny Rubow

The AWIN program is now working under new leadership after the transition of former Program Director Dale Saffold back to Arkansas State Police (ASP). Penny Rubow, formerly the AWIN Program Manager, assumed the responsibilities of AWIN Program Director on October 1, 2006.

Captain Dale Saffold recently left his leadership role with the AWIN program and moved back to his position in administration at ASP. Saffold was named as AWIN Program Director in April 2005 as a temporary assignment. During his tenure, he directed the conversion of the ASP radio system to a digital system and completed

a project to integrate the Chemical Stockpile Preparedness Program (CSEPP) counties into the ASP system. "I've been privileged to be a part of the project for the last 18 months and work with a team of committed and skilled professionals. Thanks to the dedication shown by the AWIN Steering Committee and the Local Leadership Council a strong foundation of leadership is in place for the future of the AWIN system."

Rubow was assigned to the AWIN program in June 2004, and as the program manager she coordinated numerous AWIN projects and administrative needs. "Because the vision and leadership of our stakeholders in this effort, Arkansas is now one of only four states in the nation to have a statewide, Project 25, 700/800 MHz radio system for public safety. I appreciate the opportunity to continue to build on the foundation that Dale has established," said Rubow.



## Arkansas Wireless Information Network



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